

## **Historic, Archive Document**

Do not assume content reflects current  
scientific knowledge, policies, or practices.

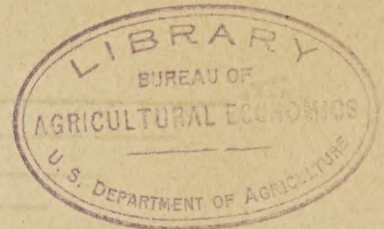




1.9  
Ag 81 Co

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

-----O-----



Report Of

Advisory Committee on Cotton Crop Reports

To The

Secretary of Agriculture

December 22, 1923

-----

-----O-----

Washington, D. C.



Letter of Invitation.

Mr. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_.

My dear Mr. \_\_\_\_\_:

With a view to continued development of the Department's Crop Reporting Service, I am calling to a conference here in Washington on December 21 and 22, a representative committee, of an advisory character, of those interested in and familiar with our cotton reports.

I should like very much to have you act as a member of this committee to represent the cotton South at large. The Department is prepared to defray your expenses for the trip.

I would be very much gratified to hear favorably from you by wire.

Sincerely yours,

Henry C. Wallace

Secretary.

PROGRAM.

ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON COTTON CROP REPORTS.

DECEMBER 21 AND 22.

MORNING SESSION: (Friday, December 21)

10 A.M.

Welcome and remarks by the Secretary of Agriculture,  
Mr. Wallace.  
Statement of program procedure, by Dr. H. C. Taylor,  
Chief, Bureau of Agricultural Economics.  
Composition of Crop Reporting Board Personnel, by  
Chairman of Crop Reporting Board, Wm. A. Schoenfeld,  
Assistant Chief, Bureau of Agricultural Economics.  
Organization and development of cotton crop reporting,  
by W. F. Callander, Statistician, In Charge, Division  
of Crop and Livestock Estimates.  
Preparing cotton crop reports, by Dr. S. A. Jones,  
Statistician and Secretary of Crop Reporting Board.  
Acreage Estimates, by W. F. Callander.  
Production Forecasts and Estimates, by Joseph A. Becker,  
Statistician  
Collection of field data, by Z. R. Pettet, Agricultural  
Statistician for Georgia.

AFTERNOON SESSION: (Friday, December 21)

2:30 P.M.

Formation of subcommittees  
And preparation of sub-committee reports.

MORNING SESSION: (Saturday)

9:30 A.M.

Presentation and discussion of reports of subcommittees.  
Preparation of final report.  
Adjournment



### THOSE INVITED

J. D. Eldridge,	Cotton Planter	Arkansas
W. A. Pierce,	Cotton Planter	North Carolina
National Association of Cotton Manufacturers,	N. F. Ayer, Representative	Massachusetts
John D. Rogers,	Cotton Planter	Texas
B. L. Moss,	Cotton Planter	Oklahoma
Atlantic Cotton Buyers and Merchants Association,	F. M. Inman, Representative	Georgia
Walter Colbert,	Cotton Planter	Oklahoma
Tait Butler,	The Progressive Farmer	Tennessee
C. A. Cobb,	The Southern Ruralist	Georgia
Texas Cotton Association,	R. C. Dickerson, Representative	Texas
New York Cotton Exchange,	Thomas Hale, Representative	New York
Geo. Gilmore	Cotton Planter	Georgia
* American Cotton Manufacturers Association,	W. E. Beattie, Representative	South Carolina
* Lucius L. McMullan,	Cotton Planter	Georgia
* American Cotton Growers,	Represented by Planters Present	Texas
* New Orleans Cotton Exchange,	Edw. S. Butler, Representative	Louisiana

\* Unable to send Representative

### SUB-COMMITTEES

1. Frequency and scope of cotton reports.  
Tait Butler  
W. A. Pierce  
J. D. Eldridge  
N. F. Ayer
2. Collection of material and preparation of reports  
C. A. Cobb  
F. M. Inman  
Geo. Gilmore  
John D. Rogers
3. Organization and personnel of Crop Reporting Service.  
R. C. Dickerson  
Thomas Hale  
B. L. Moss  
Walter Colbert



WELCOME AND REMARKS  
by  
The Secretary of Agriculture,

---

We asked you to come here to give any suggestions which will enable us to make our cotton reports more helpful to you and the trade and to help us make changes if you think changes ought to be made. Our people have outlined a short program in order that your time may be conserved and the work done to the best possible advantage.

Briefly, this is what I am anxious that you should do. First, thoroughly inform yourselves as to how the materials for our crop reports are collected, the extent of our crop organization, and the manner in which the reports are handled when they get here, I should like to have you give especial attention to the safeguards we have put about them. I hope that when you are finished you will feel as we do, that these safeguards are adequate to prevent any leaks, of which we hear rumors every once in a while. After having informed yourselves thoroughly as to how these reports are gathered, and how they are handled here, I hope you will consider whether we are making too many reports, or whether we are not making enough reports, or whether changes in the reports would be helpful. In short, put yourselves in our place. I am sure you would be animated by the same motives we are: to gather reports in the most efficient way and to handle them here in such a way that they will reflect the truth. Our only purpose is to give clear statements of the truth.

Of course, we all realize that the reports on a crop like cotton will never be satisfactory to everybody. There is always



one group that feels, their interests suffer if the report happens to be of the "bear" character, and there is another group whose interests seem to suffer if the report indicates a short crop, or a "bull" market. We are not attempting to undertake the impossible-- to satisfy everybody -- but we are trying to report the truth and it is along this line that we want your help. Do not hesitate to criticize. We are not thin-skinned in the matter of constructive criticism. We want anything that will help us to make our report better.

Dr. Taylor, Chief of the Bureau of Agricultural Economics, in which this crop estimating work is carried on, will act as your chairman and will hold himself at your service in every respect. I think he has so arranged matters that your time will be conserved and there will be time to do the work for which we have asked you to come here. Let me express my very deep appreciation -- not mine only, but that of all our people -- that you men who are so very busy should come here and give us two days of your valuable time in considering with us this very important matter. I shall hope, of course, to see you again before you adjourn.



REPORT OF ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON COTTON CROP REPORTS.

Number and Frequency of Reports.

The committee recommends that the present cotton reports be increased to two per month; that the mid-month reports cover cotton conditions as of about the 10th of each month from July to November, inclusive. These reports shall cover such factors of crop growth and condition as shall be found necessary and practicable by the Crop Reporting Service.

Increase in Field Force

In order that the recommendation to increase the number of reports may be carried out, it is recommended that the field forces of the Cotton States be sufficiently increased so as to carry out the work as provided, and that such appointees shall have had experience in cotton farming as one of the prerequisites for appointment. It is the sense of the committee that the work of estimating cotton and all other crops in Texas is too great a task for the force allotted to that State.

Separate Lists of Cotton Reporters.

The Committee further recommends that the Division of Crop and Live-Stock Estimates and field statisticians maintain separate lists of cotton reporters.

Three Regional Statisticians.

That three regional or supervisory statisticians be appointed, one for the Southeast, one for the South Central and one for the Southwest; that each be made a member of the Crop Reporting Board, and that such supervisors shall have had as one of the prerequisites for appointment at least five years experience in growing cotton and in addition thereto shall have been adequately trained in statistical methods.

Further Use of Rural Mail Carriers.

It is recommended that the department further develop its use of the reports of rural mail carriers in the work.



Field Statisticians Centrally Located.

It is recommended that the field statistician in each State have his headquarters as near the center of agricultural production as practicable.

Date of Reports and Time of Issuance.

It is recommended that the date of report and time of issuance be arranged to coincide with the dates of the ginners reports and with the time ginners reports are issued after ginners reports commence, and that they be issued as a combined report, if this be found practicable.

The Hour of Release.

In order that the confusion arising from the issuance of two Government reports on cotton within short intervals of one another may be avoided, the committee recommends that the present practice of issuing the report before the close of American exchanges be continued, but that the report be issued later than at present so that adequate time may be given to consideration of the additional crop data by the Crop Reporting Board.

Intention to Plant.

The Committee favorably recommends the intention to plant schedule with the further recommendation that if issued it be made public not later than about March 15.

That this report should show the per cent of intended change in acreage from the preceding year as stated by reporters on the basis of their actual acreage for the preceding year and their intended acreage for the present year, subject to the uncertainties of the planting season, supply of labor and other affecting elements. Coupled with this report should be published available supplemental information concerning probable supplies of labor, fertilizer, arsenate and other matters having a bearing on the problem not only of acreage but of yield.

That other available basic data necessary for understanding the national and world cotton situation be included in the same report.



That additional intermediate information be secured between the time of issuing of the intention report and the regular July crop schedule as to the readjustment of intentions which has taken place.

Schedule of Reports.

That a schedule of the season's crop reports be issued in advance with a fixed summary of procedure and that no variations be made from the schedule of procedure announced, except in case of extremest emergency and after ample notice.

Price Reporting Service on Cotton Seed.

The Committee further recommends that the department take such steps as may be found necessary looking to the establishment of a more frequent and complete price reporting service on cotton seed.

More Foreign Cotton Production Statistics.

Because of the increasing importance to American cotton producers of the competition of Foreign production, it is recommended that the Department of Agriculture, through its Bureau of Agricultural Economics, provide adequate representation in other countries, whose duty it will be to collect information that will permit the bureau to make regular reports on production of cotton in foreign countries.

Advisory Board.

The Committee recommends that the Secretary of Agriculture appoint a Committee to be known as an Advisory Board composed of producers, manufacturers, and representatives of the cotton trade, said Committee or Board to advise with the Crop Reporting Board as to scope and method of the crop reporting work at such times as it may be called upon by the Secretary of Agriculture.

Reports Safeguarded.

The Committee is thoroughly convinced that there is no possibility of a



leak in cotton estimates, that it is a physical impossibility for any information to get out of the crop reporting room until it is officially released by the Secretary of Agriculture or Acting Secretary. Not only are the windows and shades sealed, telephones disconnected and United States Marshals stationed outside the locked doors, but the Board itself can not know what the report will be until a few minutes before it is scheduled for release.

Crop Reporting Service Commended.

In view of the fact that there has been considerable criticism of the cotton reports of the Crop Reporting Board, which tends to destroy the confidence in these reports, made by those unfamiliar with the magnitude and difficulties of the work and its highly technical nature, or by those having a selfish interest to serve, this committee feel that a word of appreciation of the work now being done is due.

It is the sense of the Committee that the Department of Agriculture be commended for the manner in which its Crop Reporting Work has been developed and is now being done. The Committee feels that the production forecasts have been as accurate as could have been expected in view of the rapidly changing and unfavorable conditions that have prevailed since the extension of boll weevil infestation over practically the entire cotton belt.

Adequate Support Recommended.

Needed increases in the number of reports and improvements in equipment and methods which will insure fuller information and greater accuracy in these reports can only come with more adequate funds for doing the work expected. It is felt that fuller cooperation from the manufacturers and producers and from the public generally should be given the Crop Reporting Service.

Committee.

J. D. Eldridge, Little Rock, Ark.

Cotton Planter.

W. A. Pierce, Weldon, N. C.

Cotton Planter.

C. A. Cobb, Atlanta, Georgia.

The Southern Ruralist.

John D. Rogers, Navesota, Texas.

Cotton Planter.

F. M. Inman, Atlanta, Georgia.

Pres. Atlantic Cotton Assn.

R. C. Dickerson, Waco, Texas

Texas Cotton Assn.

Geo. Gilmore, Sandersville, Ga.

Cotton Planter.

Thos. Hale, New York City,

New York Cotton Exchange

Dr. Tait Butler, Memphis, Tenn.

The Progressive Farmer.

N. F. Ayer, Boston, Mass.

Nat'l Assn. Cotton Mfgs

B. L. Moss, Soso, Mississippi.

Cotton Planter.

Walter Colbert, Ardmore, Okla.

Cotton Planter.